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PRAYER AND FAMILY LIFE

By E.M.G.B.

BOTH prayer and family life are very much private affairs, and in particular no two Catholic families face the same set of circumstances when trying to lead the Catholic life of prayer. This therefore is my justification for launching into a description of our family background, since without this it is hard for others to know what is, or is not, applicable in their case. (This whole question of applicability seems to me a fundamental one in the spiritual life, since so much discouragement, or even real harm, can be caused by trying to force a devotion or a way of life on those who are not naturally called or fitted for that way.) In the first place both my wife and I have a certain bond in that the religious backgrounds of our families are somewhat similar. In my wife's case, she is a convert, after our marriage, and of all the rest of her relations only one cousin (with no family) is a Catholic, the remainder all being vaguely Christian or agnostic. In my case my mother, a convert, is the only Catholic member of our side: she divorced my father who was married three times in all. I had however the great privilege of being brought up a Catholic. Both my wife and I have one sister each; mine is a lapsed Catholic. Thus, except for my mother, we have no close relations who are Catholics and no real first-hand knowledge of Catholic family life on the traditional pattern. We have four children under six, a fact which almost all our relations tend to regard as a piece of carelessness bordering on madness. We are prosperous enough to own our house and to be able to afford some daily help, but not a full-time nanny, as our parents did. I am fortunate in having an interesting job which is reasonably well paid and gives me more time at home than most husbands; we also have some private income. In short, when I stand aside to view my material blessings, I feel heartily ashamed of ever being angry or depressed with life, and I try to offer up a prayer of gratitude for these blessings as often as I can.

This brings me then to my first major point which is that, with a family, positive prayer is more important than any other sort. Thanking God for all that he has given one should be a most

frequent type of prayer, thanksgiving for wife (or husband), for the children, for one's home, for all the many interests and activities that make up family life and, above all, for the opportunity to help lead souls to heaven. After all, we married people freely chose our state of life and must offer thanks to God for giving us the fulness of the condition we desired. Furthermore, in the West, we must never cease to thank God also for the material benefits we so easily take for granted; how different would our lot be if, say, we were poor Vietnamese or Indian Catholics with a family which, through no fault of ours, we had small prospect of ever feeding, clothing or housing adequately; how different too would our situation be if we were in a communist-controlled country in Eastern Europe with the authorities ceaselessly trying to cut our children off from the faith and from their parents.

A second type of prayer which is particularly appropriate to family life may be called the prayer of acceptance, though it is true it can only too easily degenerate into ejaculations of depression and resignation. This kind of prayer tends to come more spontaneously than the first, especially during the innumerable crises with which family life seems to be punctuated, for with small children sudden illnesses seem to come endlessly, and for many who are trying to rear a large family financial problems are a chronic cause of anxiety. Thus to make this prayer of acceptance does demand a good measure of at least nine out of twelve of the fruits of the Holy Ghost, namely charity, joy, peace, patience, benignity, goodness, longanimity, mildness and faith. However inadequately this prayer is achieved, the daily and nightly offering up to God of all that happens is the conscious effort of the will which is the fundamental part of prayer. Paradoxically the passive prayer of acceptance is a prayer of ceaseless activity. It is the prayer of obedience designed for the married state.

These twin pillars of prayer, the one of thanksgiving and the other of acceptance, seem to me the ones on which those with a family must concentrate. I am not in any way belittling the importance of going to mass frequently, nor of frequent reception of the sacraments, nor of any other devotions, but I do believe that the first duty of Catholics with families is to try to show a sceptical world the way in which the Church sanctifies the vocation of marriage. This means that, within certain limitations, the

care of the family must come first. With the modern conditions of little or no help either inside or outside the house, it is often almost impossible for a family to get to mass except on a Sunday (and even doing that is an operation demanding skill, patience and hard work, so that the sight of a large family at mass should remind the priest that what can be seen above the surface is only a small proportion of the whole, the time spent in church being a fraction of the time spent in getting them there). Neither is it physically practicable, for those who have small children at any rate, to attempt to live by a set of devotional rules designed for those who have no family; care of one's health is of prime importance, and any self-imposed way of spiritual life which jeopardizes health must, in these circumstances, be morally wrong. In its wisdom the catechism lists as one of the six sins against the Holy Ghost that of 'envy of another's spiritual good'.

One of the dangers of family life is that the parents' own private spiritual life can slowly be undermined and even extinguished, for the great difficulty in the family circle lies in achieving and maintaining the correct balance between the communal and the private aspects of prayer. The continuous wear and tear of family life does demand a very considerable spiritual reserve in the parents if they are to bring up the children in the way of prayer. There are many methods by which parents can preserve or increase their spiritual capital. Frequent attendance at mass and reception of the sacraments is clearly the ideal way. But for those who have to look after young children unaided, and live some distance from a church, this can be well nigh impossible, and if it is so, the fact must be calmly accepted and other means found. First there is reading. A daily effort should be made to turn one's mind to religious matters by the reading of some book or magazine. One little rule which can be managed by everyone is to read in the missal the special prayers of the saint for the day. The weekly Catholic press often has helpful articles. Periodicals, such as *THE LIFE OF THE SPIRIT*, are to my mind of the greatest value, for nearly every issue has one or more articles which are written for layfolk, and many of these are of outstanding quality; for instance I have read and reread 'His Will is our Peace' by B. M. Frederick (April 1959 number). Others may find *The Christian Democrat* more to their liking; it does not matter which, but at least one out of the large variety of Catholic periodicals ought to be taken

regularly. In the first place the periodical should be chosen with great care; it should inspire, and if it ceases to do this another one should be found, because for the married reader this periodical should always be a sort of 'spiritual bouquet', something which is joyfully awaited, to be savoured during the odd quiet quarter of an hour. Nevertheless, however stimulating such a periodical may be, there will always be articles in it which are either inapplicable or not helpful, therefore it is unlikely that a number can be read from cover to cover. Discrimination in reading is important. Where the more serious type of Catholic reading is concerned, what may be termed the spiritual classics, I can do no better than quote from B. M. Frederick's article. She writes, 'Such reading may, indeed, disastrously sap our courage; for if we see the spiritual life stretching ahead in terms of desolation, unceasing struggle and grim endurance we shall hardly find heart to take the first step.' However, before having a family, I did derive very considerable help from de Caussade's *Self-Abandonment to Divine Providence* and St Theresa of Avila's *Autobiography*, but I now find that I cannot concentrate on these works, the circumstances for which they were written seem too remote from our way of life, and the language in which they are couched is so aloof from our way of thought. The same deficiencies apply to St Francis de Sale's *Devout Life*. Nevertheless I am hoping that later in life I may be able once more to gain consolation from these and other works of a similar kind. I have left to the last the question of the regular reading of the scriptures. Although I find it hard myself, I am sure that a serious attempt should be made to follow such a practice, and where possible a specific period of the day ought to be set aside for this purpose. The ideal should be to read through the gospels and the psalms each year. Such reading should be done both slowly and meditatively.

Spiritual reading has another side to it. It does make a parent sit down quietly and try to think about matters unconnected with the hurly-burly of family life; such a brief relaxation has great therapeutic value.

Another excellent way for parents to replenish their spiritual capital is by attending retreats. For those with small children these retreats must be brief; a Saturday or a Sunday afternoon is ideal, there must be some organisation to look after the children in order that the parents may be able to listen in peace to what the

priest has to say (keeping the children under control during mass makes it impossible to concentrate properly on the Sunday sermon), and finally the retreat should be held within easy reach of those attending. For a time we were fortunate in having such retreats, held in the chapel of a neighbouring country house, and we found them most helpful and refreshing. When the children are older and travelling with them is easier, I am hoping that we shall be able to make an annual family retreat at Spode House. In the meantime, it would be a great experiment if each diocese tried to arrange two or three family retreat centres with retreats to be held every month on a Saturday or a Sunday afternoon; perhaps these could be held in the houses of religious orders. These retreats should be aimed at helping the spiritual life of those with families, with particular emphasis on methods of prayer; time should be allowed for private prayer and for a quiet talk with the priest (or priests) between the discourses; also there should be an opportunity to get to confession, the set times for confessions in a parish so often clash with essential family duties.

I fear that I have little original to say about family prayers as such. Whenever possible we say family prayers all together in the evening at the children's bed-time, and our younger boy of two and a half is proud of the fact that he can already say a somewhat garbled version of the *Hail Mary*. We try to make prayers a happy family occasion and like to think that the children enjoy it, thus we keep prayers cheerful and informal and do not allow ourselves to be put out by a certain number of interruptions and irrelevancies. As a part of these prayers we encourage the children to make their own personal requests to our Lord. We also offer up a prayer whenever we make a car trip together, say a prayer or two *en route* that we may have a safe journey, and try to make a thanksgiving prayer on arriving at our destination. Another family devotion is always to pay a visit to the church when we are in the town; on these occasions the children usually light a candle and say a brief prayer in the Lady Chapel. Although neither my wife nor I find the saying of the rosary, either publicly or privately, an easy form of devotion, we have given the elder children rosaries in the hope that perhaps they may develop that devotion to saying the rosary which we are so conscious that we lack.

Children should be brought to Sunday mass as soon as possible. Our baby of eight months has just begun to come to church.

It has been our experience that children behave well if they are accustomed to coming to church from an early age, and Sunday mass thereby becomes a weekly event to which they look forward. Our principle is to treat them, as far as possible, as responsible beings and expect them to follow what the rest of the congregation does; ours have rarely let us down. We always try to sit fairly near the front of the church so that they can watch what happens at the altar. We find that the books produced by the American organization, the Catechetical Guild Educational Society (St Paul, Minnesota), are popular, as is *My Faith* by Bishop Heenan (published jointly by Burns Oates and Macmillan). These are the only children's religious books, which I know of, that appeal to the under sevens, but I should be grateful to hear of others.

There is one further point that it would be dishonest to omit mentioning from an article of this kind. There comes a time when most parents feel that their family is as large as they can manage. I hope that it is permissible to pray that one's family will not continue to grow in numbers and that one should not fall into sin preventing any increase. At this stage periods of abstinence are demanded from the husband, whilst the wife must have great sympathy and understanding towards her husband, and both must be ready joyfully to accept God's will should another child be conceived. Here is where the bonds of love and prayer between husband and wife need to be both firm and deep. Prayer and the family life have many facets.

In conclusion therefore the reader is asked to remember that these reflections are written by one who is at a particular stage in the upbringing of his family. In five years time the situation will be different and a revised way of prayer will have to be found, for family life and prayer can never have that stability of routine which is the hallmark of religious life in the cloister; experiments must continuously be made to try to keep the spiritual life of the family in tune with the changing circumstances. Flexibility is the watchword when thinking of prayer and the family life.



PRAYER: WISDOM AND LOVE

By G.H.

PRAYER in all its fullness is nothing else than making oneself open to God. This sounds very simple, but it is hardly an answer to the question 'What is prayer?' It is merely the start of the answer. What then is being open to God, and how does one make oneself open to God? Perhaps the best way for us to begin is by our considering the two most fundamental acts that man performs. Because he is man, and not animal, his most fundamental, most characteristic acts spring from his rational nature. Using a form of expression which is not fundamental, but which is nevertheless deep rooted, we say that these two most characteristic activities of man are those of his mind and his heart. With his mind he understands, and with his heart he loves. Being open to God, then, is having one's mind open to God and having one's heart open to God. This is prayer. In a steady and lasting state of communion with God the mind is always open and turned to God, and so is the heart. The opening of the mind to God is Wisdom, and the opening of the heart to God is Love. Prayer, then, is Wisdom and Love. But what does this mean to us? for it is easier to answer the question 'How are we to grow in wisdom and love?' by saying 'Through prayer', than it is to answer the question 'How do I pray?' by saying 'Be wise and loving'.

We do not really know what is meant by Love or Wisdom. To a certain extent however we do know what is meant by love; it is wisdom that is more difficult to grasp. It is no good our being able to love if we are not also wise; for our love will be misdirected. We know what love is, however, and this is where we can start. We know what love is, because we do love. We can see ourselves loving, we can recognize it as love, whether it be self-love or love of God. Sometimes we love God and we are aware of it. Sometimes we do not, and we can be painfully aware of this too. The very nature of our love is that sometimes we do and sometimes we do not. With wisdom it is not quite the same. Wise is a word that denotes a habit of mind, something steady and continuous, but love can either mean for us a similar habit or,

more usually, simply an act of loving. It is the acts of love that we see and recognize for what they are, and thus it is that we can say that we know what it is like to love. But the habit of loving God we do not know; we cannot be so sure whether we possess it. We do not know what Love in that sense means. With wisdom it is the same; we do not know what wisdom is, because our minds are not open and turned to God habitually. We do know what it is to love, and if we can make this habitual, it will become Love; but what are the individual acts, which, if we make them continuous and all ordered towards God, will make us wise? Such acts, surely, are understanding. This is the very function of our minds, and as we have said, it is having the mind open to God that is Wisdom.

So Wisdom comes through understanding, and this understanding is, of course, of God—our understanding of him. Prayer is founded in loving and understanding God. It is essentially an activity of the whole man; we cannot just love God without understanding him, nor can we understand him without loving him. But although we can recognize our loving, can we recognize our understanding? If we cannot, then our *recipe* for prayer will not convey any meaning to us as a whole. What exactly should the mind be doing? This is by no means clear, and it is really not very surprising. We are trying to understand ourselves understanding. It is easy, by comparison, for the mind to look at the heart and understand its loving. It is easy for the heart to feel for the mind and love its understanding. But although we can and must, it is neither easy to love our loving, nor understand our understanding. It is as if the face were to try and see itself, not simply as a reflection in a mirror, but face to face just as it is! For the face it is impossible, but for the mind it is not. Let us try.

To try to see what understanding is, let us compare it with loving. The two essentially go together; they are however quite different. If we can see how they differ, then we will come to know more about what they actually are. We know a little about loving, and we know that probably the most characteristic thing about it is that it is accompanied by giving—so much so in fact that in the perfection of love loving actually becomes giving, giving one's own self. We see this quite clearly in God's love for us. God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son. We can also see this clearly in ourselves. We can simply smile at

someone and we are giving them our sympathy or support; we are in fact manifesting our love for them, making it real and active in an act which might seem so very slight, but yet is so very powerful. We are, in a very simple way, uniting ourselves to them by giving to them a part of ourselves. What, however, is the reaction of someone to whom we give in this way, or to whom we give ourselves in a big way? It will most probably be a return of love; but this will not be the most immediate simultaneous reaction. The immediate reaction will be that they understand us. In the case of a superficial level of our giving—perhaps a smile to a stranger—they will understand us as being friendly. The more we give ourselves to another, the more we will be understood (if other things do not intervene). And in understanding us the other person will return our love because of his understanding. As we have already suggested, the two must go together. The point at the moment, however, is that our giving ourselves to someone has caused them to have understanding. If we are giving, what are they doing? They are receiving; and this receiving is their understanding. They take us into themselves and make that part of us, which we have given to them, into a part of themselves. They have received us, they now know or understand us. Thus understanding is receiving; or better still it is receiving and making one's own, in the same way as loving is not giving what is another's, but what is one's own. Thus both in loving and in understanding there is a real change involved. In both you share, and in sharing you are united together, the lover to the loved.

We are talking about prayer, and prayer is loving and understanding God. Through understanding and loving we can come to understand and to love all the more. We, however, by ourselves cannot start this. It is only through God's love for us that we can return that love. He so loves us that he has given to us his only Son—the Word incarnate. It is by receiving what he gives that we can start; and it is through our act of faith that we receive what he gives; we receive the Word of God. Faith, then, is the seed of wisdom; this is where our understanding starts and grows from. A life of prayer is a life of understanding, a life searching to understand God; but it must not be thought that we can ever fully understand God. The fulness of understanding belongs to him alone. Nor in this life can we reach the degree of fulness

which belongs to us as creatures made in his image. That can only be reached in the beatific vision; and then the strength of that vision will depend upon the degree of wisdom that we have attained in this world, that is, our understanding, our holiness. A life of prayer is a life to understand God, but just finding things out about God is not necessarily understanding God. If we are concerned in finding out about God in such a way that we receive him into us and let him grow in us, we ourselves changing so as to conform with him, then we are understanding, and wisdom is beginning. If we are busy taking into ourselves things and thoughts and knowledge from around us which are not directed towards God, then these things, by being received into us and our becoming like them, will fence out our understanding of God and our life will not be in him, but only in ourselves, and that life will be dead. Through our really receiving God and giving ourselves to God, we come to understand what he is to us and what we are to him. We recognize what he is; we recognize what we are. We then can pay to him the reverence and love that is due to him alone. If we are doing this we can be said to honour and fear him; and 'the fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom'.



THE INSPIRATION OF THE BIBLE AND TRADITION

EDMUND HILL, O.P.

ORIGEN, the great Alexandrian theologian who died in A.D. 253, is a key figure in the Christian tradition of scriptural interpretation. Earlier this year a monumental book appeared on 'the sources and significance of Origen's interpretation of scripture'.¹ The author, Dr R. C. P. Hanson, D.D., is a senior lecturer in theology at Nottingham University. *Allegory and Event* is a sequel to *Origen's Doctrine of Tradition*, which appeared five years ago.

It is a book full of excellent qualities; great erudition, vigorous

¹ *Allegory and Event*, by R. C. P. Hanson. (S.C.M., 35s.)

style, acute judgments. Dr Hanson's over-all estimate of Origen as a 'prosaic rationalist', a theologian who seriously undervalued the significance of the saving event (*heilsgeschichte*) in Christian revelation, is probably to be preferred to the more favourable assessments of his thoughts made by the French Jesuits Frs de Lubac and Daniélou, who after Origen himself are the main targets of Dr Hanson's adverse criticisms.

But it is time to throw off the mask. My purpose in this article is not to praise Dr Hanson, but to bury him under my own criticisms on two points, inspiration and tradition, on which he makes a challenge to Catholic doctrine that cannot be ignored. At the end of his crucial chapter on inspiration he concludes his study of Origen's doctrine with the verdict that 'it is totally unscriptural, totally uncritical, totally unreal' (p. 209).

Now he has just said that Origen's doctrine is 'the starting point of the classical or traditional Christian doctrine of inspiration'; and at the beginning of the chapter he had quoted Zoellig (*Die inspirationslehre des Origenes*, 1902), without disputing him, as saying 'that we can find in Origen's doctrine of verbal inspiration all the elements which compose the modern Roman Catholic theory of inspiration' (p. 188). 'Verbal inspiration', be it noted in passing, has become sloganized into a term of abuse, like 'allegory' and 'fundamentalism'; you only have to label a theory as equivalent to verbal inspiration, and it stands condemned without the necessity of further argument.

Here then is the modern Roman Catholic theory of inspiration, as stated by the Vatican Council:

The Church holds all the books of the old and new testaments to be sacred and canonical, not because being composed by human efforts alone they were subsequently approved by her authority; nor simply because they contain revelation without error; but because being written under the inspiration of the Holy Ghost they have God for author, and as such were delivered to the Church (Dz 1787).

They have God for their author, that is God takes full responsibility for them, so that if they contain mistakes or falsehood, it means that God has made the mistakes and has uttered the falsehood. I think Dr Hanson will allow that this 'theory' fairly represents Origen's doctrine. This then is what he scathingly rejects as totally unscriptural, totally uncritical, totally unreal.

Totally unscriptural. What can we do but refer to texts, which if they do nothing else, at least state a *prima facie* case which Dr Hanson should dispose of before delivering himself of so sweeping a judgment? Mark xiv, 27, 29; John v, 45-47, x, 35; 1 Cor. x, 11; 2 Tim. iii, 16; 2 Peter i, 19; really one might say 'See new testament *passim*'.

Totally uncritical. This is true, but not a fault. The 'theory' of inspiration is prior to biblical criticism. Like the sacred text itself it is part of the theologian's *data*, given in faith, which he has to exercise his critical faculties on in order to understand. It is thoroughly unjust to Origen to suppose 'that he resorted to this doctrine as an expedient to justify his particular oracular treatment of the Bible; and that it was made possible only by the unlimited use of allegory' (pp. 108-9). The doctrine, as Dr Hanson elsewhere acknowledges, was received by Origen in the Church's tradition. True, it was the doctrine of Philo, the *diabolus ex machina* of Christian biblical study. But it was also the doctrine of rabbinic Judaism, from which the Church received it as a legacy undiminished by any teaching or disposition of Christ. It is precisely this doctrine of full inspiration, with its corollary of the inerrancy of scripture, that sets the Christian exegete his peculiar problem. It is quite ridiculous to call it an expedient for solving a problem which it precisely creates.

Nor on the other hand can the doctrine itself be touched by even the most devastating criticism of the solutions offered to the problem it raises. Let us go all the way with Dr Hanson in rejecting many of the inferences Origen drew from his received doctrine of inspiration and inerrancy; they were largely the fruit of his philosophical presuppositions. Let us admit, for the sake of argument, that his allegorizing read neo-Platonic truth into the Bible more readily than it elicited divine truth from it. All we can conclude is that Origen failed to solve the problem set him by the doctrine of inspiration, not that the doctrine set the problem all wrong.

Failure to recognize that Origen's doctrine of inspiration is logically prior to his allegorical method, that it is something he received in faith, vitiates all Dr Hanson's strictures. Thus he accuses Origen of arguing in a circle in his 'proofs of this inspiration; for half the time he is saying that the scriptures are inspired, because they contain divine oracles of a wonderful sort; and

for the other half he is saying that because they are inspired they must contain divine oracles, even though they do not appear to' (p. 189). A neat circle indeed, but it is Dr Hanson's not Origen's. A reference to the *Peri Archon* IV, i, 6, 7, which he makes in the next sentence or two, amply clears Origen of the charge. 'He maintains that . . . the scriptures are inspired, because they are inspiring. . . . Thus he says, that he who reads the prophetic books "finds himself experiencing as he reads the phenomenon of inspiration". But immediately afterwards he adds that we cannot always see the inspiration of the Bible on the surface of the text, though we can be sure *in faith* that it is always there' (my italics). There you have the breach of the circle. Inspiration for Origen is a matter of faith. If therefore he sometimes maintains that the scriptures are inspired because they are inspiring, he is not really trying to *prove* inspiration, he is just suggesting a more or less persuasive, but definitely not demonstrative, apologetic argument in support of the faith. The occasional 'experience' of inspiration is no more than a possible, but by no means necessary, consequence of faith in it. So the first half of Origen's so-called circle is a procedure, apologetic or paraenetic, in support of but clearly not in proof of faith. The second half is an argument *from* faith, and granted the premise of inspiration it is a pretty powerful one—and a traditional one.

Finally, *totally unreal*. This is so imprecise a charge that it is hard to rebut. I suppose it means that the doctrine has absurd consequences, and makes genuine scriptural interpretation impossible. Here is the skeleton of a section which seems to exude Dr Hanson's conviction of the unreality of the doctrine:

Two theological convictions underlie this rigid theory of inerrancy. The first is that the Holy Spirit is ultimately the author of scripture, whatever other names may appear as the authors. . . . The other is that the incarnation of Jesus Christ the Word of God has a parallel in the indwelling of the Word of God in the scriptures. . . . Nothing could assure us more eloquently of Origen's conviction of the divine status and authorship of the Bible than this startling doctrine of the Bible as the extension of the incarnation.

One would expect that with such a doctrine of inspiration as this, Origen would have regarded the prophets and evangelists and other agents of the Holy Spirit speaking in the scriptures as

mere dictaphones. . . . This certainly is the doctrine of Philo. . . .

A few passages of Origen suggest that he too adopted this 'ecstatic' account of the method of the Holy Spirit's inspiring of his agents. . . .

But elsewhere Origen makes it perfectly clear that his considered opinion was that inspiration did not remove or paralyse the prophet's or evangelist's control of his rational faculties (p. 193-5).

This passage illustrates at once the sterling quality of Dr Hanson's academic honesty and the vast extent of his misapprehensions. He assumes that if you ascribe authorship to the Holy Ghost, you thereby render the authorship of the human writers merely nominal. Hence his surprise that Origen did not in fact regard them as mere dictaphones—or even as mere secretaries. But the Catholic doctrine, the formulation of which, we all agree, owes so much to Origen, holds that scripture has a dual real authorship, divine and human. The human authors are indeed the agents or instruments of the divine author, but the divine author uses them precisely as *human* agents, not as animated fountain-pens. In scholastic language, the first cause operates in all secondary causes, whether in an ordinary or, as here, in a special supernatural way, without diminishing their real causality or making it simply fictitious. So the Holy Ghost uses the rational faculties of the sacred writers, their literary abilities, their polish or their roughness, their imagination or their lack of it, their very thought-structures. Thus the human writers, source and compiler, J, E, P and D, Q and proto-Mark and all the rest of them, are as fully author of their writings as Virgil or Homer of theirs, and their writings are open to the same sort of textual, literary, and historical criticism. But in this unique case they are not the only authors; what they say, the Holy Ghost says through them, and so their writings, being also his writings, are further subject to a unique theological criticism, which must control the literary and historical.

Origen indeed, like all patristic theologians almost without exception, was interested in the divine authorship to the practical neglect of the human. Hence a great many of the inadequacies of patristic interpretations, though it should be realized in defence of the Fathers that they had none of our modern aids. It is unfair to judge them, as Dr Hanson tends to do, by modern standards.

Hence too the occasional rigidity of their notion of inerrancy, and the superficiality to our minds of their harmonizations of apparent inconsistencies. Their idea of truth was sometimes, though not always, too narrow to be able to take in such literary forms as fiction, fable, folklore, epic, or such figures of speech as hyperbole. The modern tendency on the other hand is to be interested in the human authorship to the practical exclusion of the divine, and this can be death to any valid theological understanding of scripture.

To conclude then about inspiration; we can grant Dr Hanson that many of the inferences which Origen drew from this doctrine, and which continued to be taken for granted for many a long century, were unscriptural, uncritical, and unreal; for example that the old testament is a sort of cryptic cypher, a dress-rehearsal Dr Hanson calls it, of the new, and that the *majores* of the old testament, patriarchs and prophets, had an explicit knowledge of the revelation which the old testament thus cryptically contained; or that the more baffling passages of scripture are best treated like the riddling utterances of the Delphic oracle. But we must insist, in the name of logic, that these inferences are not to be confused with and in no way prejudice the doctrine itself.

As for tradition, Dr Hanson scarcely touches on it in this book at all. It was the subject of the companion volume, *Origen's Doctrine of Tradition*, which I regret I have not read. But in this work he has one footnote, in which he makes an ironical attack on Fr Daniélou, that would be quite devastating did it not reveal a total misapprehension of the Catholic notion of tradition.

Daniélou, *Origène*, p. 142, notes this tendency in Origen to quote both the reading in his text and a variant reading, and to expound both. He comments: 'He allows a double authority, that of scripture and that of tradition. It is evident that this has remained the Church's position.' If this remark has any meaning, it seems to be that the tradition of the Church can supply acceptable readings which are not those of the original text—surely a very odd suggestion! (p. 176, n. 1).

What the remark actually means is this; both variants cannot indeed be inspired scripture. But in cases of doubt either might be, and even where the interpreter is reasonably certain which is the correct reading, the variant may still be of theological value as witnessing to the Church's tradition, that is to its traditional

belief, not to its traditional *text*. The Church can supply acceptable readings, not in the sense that they have any quality of scriptural inspiration, but in the sense that being contained in versions which the Church receives, they can be interpreted as acceptable statements of the Church's traditional and divinely guaranteed belief.



THE DEACON IN THE PARISH—I¹

JOSEPH HORNEF

IN Easter 1955 at Freiburg-Wallenried, Father Conrad Fischer, parish priest and general secretary of *Catholica Unio*, was suddenly snatched from the fruitful field of his activities by a malignant disease. One year before his death he wrote to me on the question of the revival of the diaconate in the following terms:

I personally am deeply pre-occupied with the question, more deeply, perhaps, even than yourself. In very truth it could be the source of a unique renewal of vitality within the Catholic Church. The presence of one or several deacons living with their families in a parish would bring the Church to the notice of many laymen. People would be compelled to a far greater extent to take 'churchfolk' into account. The concerns of the Church would be more deeply impressed on the minds of lay-people. . . . Through the diaconate something would come to life again in the Church; the layman's sense of responsibility towards his parish.

Do these words amount to no more than a kindly exaggeration, or are they the precious legacy of a wise and far-seeing priest, filled with love for the Church—the sort of message that we may not ignore? The discussion which follows will provide grounds for an unequivocal answer.

Efforts have been made in many different ways to re-vitalize the parish community. The specialized forms of the apostolate

¹ The original of this article was published in *Liturgisches Jahrbuch* 1956 Heft 1/2. It is reprinted here by kind permission of the editor of that periodical, and is translated by Joseph Bourke, O.P.

which concentrate on particular social or occupational *milieux* are extremely important. But still the parish must continue to provide the basic framework within which liturgical worship and apostolic work are carried out. It is true that the deacon has also a profoundly significant part to play in the more specialized forms of apostolate mentioned above. One has only to visualize the possibility of the worker-deacon, who could perhaps be more effective among his workmates than the worker-priest; for the latter is always regarded as an alien even though he stands at the same work-bench. Here however we shall confine ourselves to speaking of the deacon's place in the parish. Neither shall we enter into the question of the employment of deacons in specialist capacities.² Here too the deacon could make a valuable contribution to the Church by releasing many priests for more directly apostolic work in the parishes. Among our Evangelical brethren the use of deacons in such positions has already proved its value over a period of several hundreds of years (since the days of Wiechern). Today the problem is being discussed in Evangelical circles of how to make the parish deacon too a reality. And it is over the works of charity in particular that the question has been arising so persistently in the German Evangelical Church. Our question therefore can be put like this: If the office of deacon were revived, what would be the significance for the Catholic Church of the deacon ordained specifically for the parish community?

Deacon and Liturgy

The aim of the liturgical revival is not to revive ancient forms and usages at any cost. Still less does it stem from aesthetic desires. It is a question of the vital participation of the faithful in the liturgy. In this direction much has already been achieved, and still more remains to be accomplished. The revival of the diaconate would be of invaluable assistance in inducing the faithful to take an active part in the liturgy and life of the Church.

Such a revival would have the effect of bringing back a practical living function to correspond to the sacramental consecration; as things are today, little more than the ordination ceremony survives.

The diaconate constitutes the first degree of *ordo*, the sacrament

² *Der Anstaltsdiakon*: i.e. employed in schools, hospitals, etc. (Translator.)

of consecration by which the Church has maintained her priestly office in existence throughout the centuries. The office of deacon is thus a priestly office. This is how the early Church regarded it. According to her terminology (cf. Benedict and Leo the Great), the *ordo sacerdotalis*, order of priesthood, was comprised of bishop, priest, and deacon; the priest and deacon were to see to the priestly offering, *sacerdotio fungi*.

The characteristic feature of the deacon's office is, as its name implies, humble and unassuming service. It follows from the unity of the sacrament of order that the deacon is called to all priestly activities which are not reserved to the higher degree of the sacrament and which do not require a further sacramental consecration for their exercise. This applies to the whole range of priestly activities.

If the Church decides to restore the diaconate to its ancient significance, the lower orders will be restored together with it; in fact these will come first. This does not imply that all the minor orders must re-emerge as ecclesiastical offices. But it would not be unreasonable to suggest that the Church could ordain members of the Caritas organization as acolytes, and catechists as lectors. Let us go a step further and suggest that the diaconate might be introduced both as a whole-time and part-time office in the parish. This would have the effect of equipping every parish, each according to its size, with a group of clerics of various degrees of order, in addition to the parish-priest.

He who undertakes an office in virtue of sacramental consecration incurs with that office a quite definite responsibility and undertakes with it grave obligations with regard to the Church and the parish. Once the priest ceases to be the sole bearer of such an office, once the body of consecrated ministers grows, it will follow that the sense of responsibility towards the Church will increase not only in those ordained, but among the rest of the faithful too. The heightened sense of responsibility which ordination and its corresponding function in the Church carry with them cannot fail to make itself felt in the family and among the professional acquaintances and friends of the ordained minister. So conspicuous a position carries with it both a vocation and a warning for those involved. Neither in public nor in private can the ordained person allow himself the same latitude as those others who have not been specially chosen as he has from the

community. It is essential that each of these degrees of order should be related to the worship of the altar. To the office which is transmitted symbolically in the ordination ceremony corresponds not only actual positive ministry at the altar in the fullest sense, but also the practical work appropriate to the particular order. Thus in the ordination of a lector, the book from which the liturgical readings are taken is handed over. In the liturgy the lector has the task of reading this to the community; then he leaves the altar to enter his field of practical activity as catechist. The same is true, as will be shown forthwith, of the part the deacon plays in the worship of the altar. Each of these clerics, called from the ranks of the laity, will do service at the altar in some form or other. Instead of altar-boys (incidentally these need not necessarily disappear), men either young or old will assist the priest and serve at the altar as ordained ministers. This was the express wish of the Council of Trent, namely that ordained ministers only should exercise the functions for which a special order has been provided. Moreover the Council was ready, in order to achieve this end, to admit married men too to the lower orders. In this way each of the ordained would participate directly at the altar in the Church's liturgy. Each of them would be able to utter his *Introibo ad altare Dei*. Each would be drawn into the *opus Dei*, the everlasting adoration of God through the Church. At the same time each would have among the faithful his own brothers, sisters, parents, children. All of these would feel themselves represented at the altar in a special way by one who belonged to them; through him all would be included in the sacred act. Such a measure could not fail to bring genuine new life into the community of the faithful, in the form of active participation in the liturgy.

The deacon himself would stand day by day at the side of the priest to assist him in the holy sacrifice, as well as to act as minister of the blessed Sacrament. In Cistercian monasteries, and in certain other orders, the *missa cum diacono* (i.e. with the deacon alone and no sub-deacon) is still celebrated even today. This is an ancient rite which could be revived together with the revival of the diaconate; for it is so simple in form that it could be adapted for daily use, even where the full-scale high mass with sub-deacon would be impracticable. Incidentally, even abstracting from the question of the revival of the diaconate, one would like

to see this ancient form of the mass liturgy brought to life again.

Priest and deacon alike live by the altar. It is the source from which they draw strength for the holy sacrifice. In the person of the deacon the married man stands at the altar in an attitude of service. One may well say that he can dedicate this unassuming, and yet most exalted, ministry in a special way to God's married people, whom he represents. This attitude of service is most beautifully symbolized in the deacon's part in the offertory ceremony; when the priest raises the chalice, the deacon supports the priest's arm with his left hand and the chalice with his right.

It is not important that the liturgy should attract people by the multiplicity of its forms, nor that the bearing of adults on the altar, instead of the often quite unseemly fidgeting and stammering of the altar-boys, would be more appropriate to the solemnity of the act of adoration. But if a group of men from the parish could participate directly in the service of the altar as ordained ministers, and if through them their relations, friends and acquaintances could be given a personal connection with the sacred ministry, if above all the laity could be given an opportunity to receive orders and so to take an active part in the liturgical ceremonies, then one of the most valuable advantages of the revival of this office would have been achieved.

The question must also be considered from the point of view of the approaching liturgical reform. Here the revival of the diaconate becomes quite especially significant for the parish. Perhaps the deacon could assume the role of intermediary between the priest and the parish community. The priest could preserve the symbol of the Church's unity by continuing to carry out the liturgy for the most part in Latin, while the deacon could render his part of the prayers and proclaim the divine word in the vernacular. It need not be emphasized what broad perspectives open out here, or what possibilities are offered of the parish actively co-operating in the liturgy.

The Deacon and Charity

It was not merely material considerations which led the apostles to choose out the seven to serve the tables at the *agape*; otherwise they would not have prayed over them with the imposition of hands. The *agape* was connected with the sacrificial meal, and here too the deacon assisted. When the faithful brought their

gifts of bread, wine, oil, and so forth, to the altar, it was the deacon who received the gifts and divided them up. First he set aside what was needed at mass, then he took the rest (apart from what was needed for the upkeep of the clergy) to the houses of the poor. In the old days the deacon distributed the Precious blood to the faithful; so also today he could give holy communion. It was his duty then, as it could be again, to take holy communion. It was his duty then, as it could be again, to take holy communion to the sick in their homes.

How closely then was the deacon's service at the altar bound up with his service of the poor and sick! The one function was absolutely continuous with the other. The service of the sick was liturgical and apostolic too. This unity has been lost. It must be restored again in the diaconate.

To the Church as such the task has been given of preaching our Lord not only by words but by the works of active charity as well. She cannot fulfil this task in its deepest significance by means of organizations (for these are not the Church herself!). She must fulfil it too through her ordained ministers. Now the priest, burdened as he is with the manifold responsibilities of the cure of souls, can hardly manage to discharge this responsibility to the poor and sick brethren in person; therefore let the deacon do it, and let him do it from the altar. Without this immediate bond between charity and the altar, the Church's charitable works are in danger of degenerating into mere welfare work and routine benevolence. The Church's practical charities demand not only subjectively right religious dispositions but also an objective bond with the sacramental sphere. In the diaconate this could be achieved. Social problems are so urgent today! In the social encyclicals the Church has tackled these problems and indicated the right lines for solving them. But she must also come to grips in practice with social needs. This is particularly true of missions where social problems are often far more difficult. The deacon would be the appropriate figure for this task. But the whole-time deacon would have to be equipped with the necessary specialized knowledge. Apart from him the part-time deacon would have to dedicate himself whole-heartedly to the work of charity. For this purpose a group of lay-helpers would have to be enlisted to work under the deacon's leadership. Thus the parish community would have to appreciate the fact that all those who partake of the

holy eucharist at the table of our Lord are responsible for their brothers and sisters, and that the body of the faithful must themselves undertake the care of their poor and sick to the utmost of their ability. What can be done on the spot must be done without expecting external assistance. It cannot be denied that in this sphere there is endless work to be done and that this side of the Church's activity is particularly pressing.

(To be concluded)



ST BRIDGET OF SWEDEN

MICHAEL MUMMERY

MEDIEVAL saints are often difficult to understand. They flourished at a period when things were so very different from today that, however hard we try, we just cannot enter into their minds. We can't apply their lives to our own. Joan of Arc was inspiring but rather terrifying; some of the early monks did heroically saintly things which just amaze us. This is true, also, to a great extent of the mystics, but there is one big exception to the rule, and that is St Bridget of Sweden. She was, indeed, a mystic—she had more than her fair share of visions—and yet there was much in her life which can appeal to the modern Catholic. That she was an outstanding personality is attested by the great respect that the Swedes still bear for her even though the majority of them have abandoned the faith which was her guiding principle in life.

Bridget's life spans about three-quarters of the fourteenth century, which by any standards may be reckoned to have attained the nadir. The more pessimistic are inclined to view modern times as uniformly bad, but a cursory glance at the century in which Bridget lived reveals that the general level of spirituality and morals was depressingly low. From all this the saint was shielded in her early life, because, being born of a noble family closely allied to royalty, she spent her formative years on her father's vast estate in Uppland, north of Stockholm. Her birth

coincided with the opening of the century and she was running about and playing with her friends at the same time as Edward II was ruling so badly in England. It is a little surprising to learn that she married at the tender age of thirteen until one realizes that this was quite common practice. Her husband was Ulf Gadmarsson, a pleasant but rather weak man whom Bridget seems to have accepted without ever evincing a passionate love for him. However, Bridget became the mother of eight children and raised them herself. So, although she was beginning to have the visions which have made her so famous, her feet were very firmly planted on the ground. She did all she could to bring her children up in the practice of religion but was very disappointed in her son Karl, whose eventual death she considered the answer to her prayer, since it prevented him falling into the clutches of Joanna, the notorious queen of Naples.

Her husband died when she was forty. She had long felt that the married state was holding her back from the work which she really wished to do and Ulf was no great help to her. He actually died wearing the Cistercian habit which he had been allowed to adopt after a very friendly separation from Bridget. She now set about the laborious task of recording her visions which were concerned not only with the intimate relationship between the soul and God but also with political and international affairs. They were often prophetic in character. She received our Lord's command to found an order, and to do this obtained from the king and queen of Sweden a grant of land at Vadstena where the monastery was built. It is of interest that there is at Syon Abbey a community of Bridgettine nuns which has a continuous history from pre-reformation days, since during the troubled days of the Tudors it moved to Portugal and continued to receive English novices. It was to obtain permission for the founding of this order that Bridget determined to go to Rome to see the pope. It was a dramatic decision because she never returned to her native land.

She was shocked beyond measure with the evils and troubles that she witnessed as she journeyed across Europe and which reached their culmination when she reached Rome.

Europe was rent by the Hundred Years' War. This was bad enough. But of far greater consequence was the Babylonian captivity of the popes who had migrated to Avignon and were merely creatures of the French king. Rome was an empty shell.

Licentiousness and open immorality prevailed in society, a society which was cloven by the feuds between the noble families. Many churches had fallen into disuse, some of them were even used for profane purposes, and the administration of the Catholic Church had practically ceased to exist. All this had a profound effect upon Bridget. Anxious though she was to obtain papal approval of her new order, she was determined not to go off to Avignon to seek it. Instead she decided to remain in Rome until such time as the popes should decide to return. As it turned out, she remained there for twenty years and it is no exaggeration to say that, during that time, she virtually exercised paramount influence over the Church.

In accordance with custom, it was hoped that 1350 would be declared a holy year, and that the pope, Clement VI, would use this opportunity for his return to Rome. As if in judgment upon the lax moral state of the times, Europe was swept by the black death in 1349 and the death rate was appallingly high. In England almost a third of the population was wiped out in a single year. In this year, too, Bridget had some startling revelations from God which she was commanded to pass on to the pope. Through her God told the pope:

‘My hour is nearly come when I shall visit upon thee all thy forgetfulness and sin. As I raised thee above all others, so shall thy soul be plunged into terrible torment, which shall sorely afflict thy body and thy spirit, if thou obeyest not my word. And thy unruly tongue shall be silent within thy mouth; that title which thou sanctifiest on earth shall be forgotten and dishonoured in the sight of me and my saints.’

Bridget never spared her tongue when talking to the pope. On one occasion she called him ‘a murderer of souls, more unjust than Pilate and more cruel than Judas’. We might be inclined to regard this as exaggeration were it not for the fact that similar things were being said by others at the same time including St Catherine of Siena.

Unfortunately these threats and warnings fell on deaf ears and the popes stayed at Avignon. Bridget had plenty of time to study the state of things in Rome. She summed up the general situation by saying: ‘Many altars are left desolate, the sacraments exposed in taverns, and those who offer them serve Mammon rather than God.’ She pinpointed five grave abuses in the Church. (1) Very

few people attended even Sunday mass and even fewer observed the frequent use of the confessional so that the sacraments were almost completely neglected. (2) There was a lot of loose living among all ranks of society. (3) Lent was not observed as a time of fasting and penance. (4) Employers forced their servants to work on Sundays. (5) Christians practised usury more than the Jews themselves.

Bridget paid a number of visits to Naples which was ruled by Queen Joanna whose own moral tone was reflected in the state of her Court. Naples has always had something of a reputation for loose living, but under Joanna it surpassed itself. She herself had been married three times and her husbands had parted from her under suspicious circumstances. She seemed very much attracted to Bridget and for a while the saint thought that she was making some impression upon her. However, when she saw Bridget's son Karl, she fell passionately in love with him and he was swept off his feet. They proposed to live together and to celebrate their union they intended to have a magnificent banquet. Bridget, hearing of all this, prayed to God for divine intervention. It came swiftly and finally.

Karl died the night before the banquet. At the funeral, while Joanna was seen to be shedding copious tears, Bridget followed the coffin calmly. It was as if she had been prepared to make even this supreme sacrifice that her son might be free of sin.

Bridget had a short period of happiness when the pope, Urban V, actually returned to Rome in 1367, but he went back to Avignon three years later. Bridget accompanied him part of the way trying to persuade him to remain, but he was obdurate and gave her a sort of consolation prize in the recognition of her order.

Sorrowfully, she realized that her work was nearly done and that, humanly speaking, it had failed. She had, however, one last mission to fulfil—a visit to the Holy Land. It was on her journey there that Karl died at Naples. Another call on her way was at Cyprus, which she found to be a den of iniquity as notorious as Naples and Rome. However, her stay in Jerusalem consoled her for all the sorrows and disappointments she had had since she left Sweden. She returned to Rome in 1373 and died the following year. Her body was carried back all the way to her own land and buried at Vadstena in the home of the nuns which she herself had

founded. Some years after her death an official investigation was started of her claims to canonization. The evidence collected from those who had had first-hand acquaintanceship with the saint is said to be the finest collection of documents in the Swedish archives. Unfortunately, just at the time when the investigation was under way the terrible great schism split the Church. Consequently, the consideration of St Bridget's life of sanctity was deferred, but she was eventually canonised in 1391.

Did Bridget succeed or fail? Such a question is difficult to answer from a merely human standpoint for the ways of God are mysterious. Her object was the reform of the Church, which, if it had come in the fourteenth century, might have maintained the unity which was so completely shattered by the reformation in the sixteenth century. There were many like Bridget, crying in the wilderness, and there were some that wished to rend the Church by heresy. But however much Bridget might rail at the pope and call him all the vile things that could be imagined, she never for one moment called into question the authority of his sacred office. Hers was possibly the last century in which a saint could chase the pope across half Europe—castigating him and trying to bring him to his senses. It was a century filled with tremendous enthusiasms and terrible outrages. The technical efficiency of the Church was unimpaired; it worked because the system had been established over the centuries; it worked despite the fact that there was something rotten in the state of Rome. But there was a need for a new spirit that would move the cardinals and bishops in their palaces and stir up the monks and friars who had fallen off from their first fervour. In every age there comes forth one—like a voice crying in the wilderness—to point the way. Such a one must necessarily be terribly alone, for he or she is against the world. Such a one was Bridget—such a one, later, was Joan of Arc—such were Wesley and Newman and Vincent McNabb. No age is lacking in the men and women of the Spirit and no age is fit to pass judgment upon whether they succeeded or failed.

But in Sweden Bridget lies at peace and around her body her spiritual daughters pray that the work that she tried to do may succeed. If she returned today, would she rejoice or weep again?

CHRIST THE KING

from a sermon of St Augustine on Psalm 44

The first five verses of this psalm, from 'My heart has uttered a good word' to 'Your right hand will conduct you wonderfully', Augustine has interpreted as being addressed to Christ, partly by God the Father, who utters a good word when he eternally begets the Son, and partly by the psalmist speaking prophetically. Then he continues in the same vein:

YOUR arrows are sharp, very potent.' It means his words, piercing the heart, arousing love. As the bride says in the Canticle, 'I have been wounded by charity' (Cant. ii, 5). She means that she is in love, that she is on fire, that she is sighing for the bridegroom whose words have pierced her like arrows. 'Your arrows are sharp, very potent', both piercing and effective. 'Peoples will fall beneath you.' They have been struck and have fallen. But while we see peoples subjected to Christ, we do not see them falling, do we? He explains where and how they fall: 'in the heart'. That is where they drew themselves up against Christ, and where they fall before Christ. Saul used to blaspheme Christ, he was drawn up to his full height; now he prays to Christ, he has fallen down, he has been laid low. He has been killed as Christ's enemy in order to live as Christ's disciple. An arrow was shot from heaven and struck Saul in the heart. He was still Saul, not yet Paul, still drawn up to his full height, not yet laid low. He was hit by an arrow and fell in the heart. It was not when he was knocked flat on his face that he fell in the heart, but when he said 'Lord, what do you want me to do?' (Acts ix, 6). Why, just now you were out to bind Christians and deliver them to punishment, and are you now saying to Christ, 'Lord, what do you want me to do?' What a sharp, potent arrow it must have been at which Saul fell, to become Paul!

As with him, so with the peoples. Look at the nations, look at them subject to Christ. So 'the peoples will fall beneath you in the heart of the king's enemies'—that is in the heart of your enemies. It is him he is calling king, him he recognizes as king. 'In the heart of the king's enemies.' They were enemies, but they were hit by

your arrows, they fell before you, from enemies they were made into friends. As enemies they died, as friends they live.

'Your throne, O God, is for ever and ever.' The throne of the Jewish kingdom was only for a time, it belonged to those who were under the law, not to those who were under grace. He came to deliver those who were under the law and set them up under grace. Now his throne is for ever and ever. Why? Because it is God's, and God could not have a throne that lasts only for a time.

'A sceptre of straightening is the sceptre of your kingdom.' It is a sceptre of straightening because it puts men straight. They were bent and twisted, they wanted to reign over themselves, they were in love with themselves and their evil deeds. They would not subject their wills to God, but wanted to bend God's will to their own lusts. The sinner is often angry with God for the dry weather, but God mustn't be angry with him for being a true waster. It happens practically every day, men sitting around finding fault with God. He ought to have done this, it was wrong of him to do that. You, I suppose, see what is to be done, and he doesn't? You are twisted, he is straight. When did you ever fit something twisted to something straight? You cannot align it. If you place a bent board on a level floor, it does not fit or stay steady. The floor is level all over, but the board is bent and uneven. God's will is level, yours is bent. To you his will seems bent because you cannot be made to fit it. Straighten yourself to it, instead of wanting to bend it to you. You cannot do that anyhow, so it is a waste of time to try. His will is always straight. Do you want to stick tight to it? Then be straightened. In this way the sceptre of him who rules you will be a sceptre of straightening. A king is a person who rules; he rules by putting things straight. For this reason Christ our king is a king of straight people. Just as he is our priest by sanctifying us, so he is our king by ruling us. But what does it say in another psalm? 'With the holy you will be holy, and with the innocent man you will be innocent, and with the choice man you will be choice, and with the crooked you will be crooked' (Ps. xvii, 26). Not that he really is crooked, but crooked men think he is. The good pleases you, you find God is good; the good annoys you, you find God seems warped. God is bent as far as you are concerned, but it is the bends in you make him seem so; his straightness is always the same. Listen to another psalm: 'How good is the God of Israel to the straight of heart' (Ps. lxxii, 9).

'A sceptre of straightening is the sceptre of your kingdom. You have loved justice and hated iniquity.' There is his sceptre of straightening for you: 'you have loved justice and hated iniquity'. Take this sceptre as your rule, let Christ be your king. Let this sceptre rule you, or else it will break you. It is made of iron, that sceptre, rigid and unbending. What does it say about it—'You will rule them with an iron sceptre, and like a potter's vessel you will crush them' (Ps. ii, 9)? It rules some, crushes others, rules spiritual people, crushes carnal. So make this sceptre your standard.

Is there something about it you are afraid of? But this is all there is to it: 'you have loved justice and hated iniquity'. So what are you afraid of? Perhaps you used to be iniquitous, is that it? You hear about your king that he hates iniquity, and you are afraid. Well, there is something you can do about it. What is it he hates? Iniquity, not you. But there is iniquity in you, is there? God hates it; then hate it yourself, so that you will both be hating the same thing. You will be God's friend if you hate what he hates. In the same way you will love what he loves. Let your iniquity displease you in yourself, and God's creation please you in yourself. This is the position; you are an iniquitous man. Two words, 'iniquitous' and 'man'; one signifies a nature, one a fault. God made one for you, you yourself have made the other. Love the one God made, hate the one you have made, because God hates it too.

See now how you are already beginning to fit into God when you hate what he hates. He is going to punish sin, because a sceptre of straightening is the sceptre of his kingdom. It is simply not possible for sin not to be punished. Sin has to be punished—otherwise it would not be sin. Then get in before him; you don't want him to punish it, so punish it yourself. That is why he still goes on putting it off, holding his hand, stretching the bow, that is uttering his threats. Do you think he would shout so much about his going to strike you if he really wanted to strike you? He is holding his hand from your sins then; see you don't hold yours. Get busy punishing your sins, because sins cannot go unpunished. Punishment must come either from you or from him. You acknowledge them and he will pardon them, you look at them squarely, and he will overlook them.

'A sceptre of straightening is the sceptre of your kingdom.' None of us should beguile himself too much with God's mercy

—it is a sceptre of straightening. Am I saying God is not merciful? What could be more merciful than he who spares sinners so, he who does not care what their past contains once they have been converted to him? But you must love his mercy in such a way that you value his truthfulness. His mercy cannot do away with his justice, nor his justice with his mercy. Meanwhile as long as he bides his time, do not you bide yours; for a sceptre of straightening is the sceptre of his kingdom.



GAMALIEL

(Questions should be addressed to Gamaliel, c/o the Editor, 'THE LIFE OF THE SPIRIT', Hawkesyard Priory, Rugeley, Staffs.)

Q. I am prompted by the question on the creation in the July LIFE OF THE SPIRIT to ask another which has been worrying me for a long time. We are told in Genesis that God made the green herb on the third day, but the sun was not made until the fourth day. If, as we are told, each day of creation lasted for some millions of years, how did the green herb grow at all, let alone become green or ripen its fruit, without the sun?

Does this knock the bottom out of evolution? If the days of creation were really days one could understand it, otherwise it would indeed be a miracle.

N.D.D.

(National Diploma in Dairying)

A. May I refer you again to what I said in reply to the question in the July issue, 'that the account of creation in Genesis is not a scientific description, but an imaginative dramatic picture'.

And so, to answer your second question first, no interpretation of Genesis can either knock the bottom out of evolution, or put the bottom into it, because evolution is a scientific theory, advanced to explain a huge collection of data, supported by much evidence, in which however there are gaps. Genesis advances no

evidence one way or the other, for or against, because the man who wrote the account of creation in the first chapter was not concerned with accurately describing facts, as he knew them either by experience or by being told about them by God.

Your first question I cannot answer at all, because it is based on the assumption, which is not a sound one, that Genesis is an accurate description of what took place at the beginning of the world, but written in a sort of cypher, in which, for example, one day equals a million years. I will try and show what I mean by saying that Genesis is an imaginative, dramatic picture, and why in consequence your question does not arise.

The author is talking about God as if he were a human being on a large scale; God speaks, and sees, and makes things, and rests, and works. But the author knew as well as you and I do that God is not a human being on a large scale, that he is not a material being with eyes and ears and hands. God is so completely other, that no human words which human experience has ever devised can be strictly appropriate for talking about him, about what he is and what he does. Even this little word 'he' is not strictly applicable to God because it implies that he is male and not female, whereas he is beyond the distinction between male and female. But there is nothing wrong with talking about God as if he were a human being, just as sailors talk about a ship as if it were a woman and call it 'she', provided we realize that he is not a human being, and that we are talking imaginative, story-book language. There is also a lot to be said for talking about God, as the Bible often does, as if he were a rock, or a thunderstorm, or a volcano, or a shining light, or a gentle breeze, or a lamb or a lion. All these things are like him in some respects, all tell us something about him, and the more things we compare him to, the less likely we are to identify him with any one of them.

But the thing that is most like God is man, and so the author of Genesis talks about God as if he were a man. To be more precise he is talking about him as if he were a builder, and he is building the world as a sort of house. Being a good builder, he does it in a working week. The writer of the first chapter of Genesis probably wrote it in Babylon when the Jews were in captivity there; and he probably wrote it as a sort of counter-blast to the heathen idolatry of his Babylonian masters. They pictured their gods as living in temples, those seven-tiered towers, called

ziggurats, which gave rise to the story of the tower of Babel.

Well, the true God, our writer is saying to them, does not need men to build him a temple to live in; he built his own temple, which is this world. And furthermore, this world was not born out of a chaotic conflict between primordial gods of heaven and monsters of the deep, as Babylonian myths would have it; it was the result of calm and ordered architectural construction by the one and only Almighty God. So the sequence of acts in the days of creation follows an imaginative pattern, and presents an aesthetic harmony. God makes light on the first day, because the distinction between light and darkness, night and day, is perhaps the most elemental and obvious distinction in our experience. God begins by distinguishing the various elements and parts of the world he is making. So after making light and separating it from darkness, he makes the sky, which was imagined as a solid dome, to separate the waters above and the waters below; in other words he clears a space for the world he is making. Then he separates the world proper, the dry land, from the waters below, and the basic structure of his house temple is complete. Now he starts decorating; he decorates the dry land first, with vegetation, and the sky second, with sun, moon and stars. Perhaps the author put them in that order because he was keeping the more noble decoration, the celestial, to the last; or perhaps he thought of the green herb and vegetation as being almost a part of the dry land—or at least a necessary part of its distinction from the sea. He would have regarded the barren desert as rather like the sea, a symbol of terrifying, untameable chaos. In any case he is not thinking of the scientific relationships of cause and effect, etc., between sun and vegetation.

After decorating his temple, God proceeds to furnish it. The sea and air, these 'alien' elements, are furnished first (not even the chaotic elements escape this builder's control), and then on the sixth day the earth is furnished. The last thing to be made is the crown of creation, man, who is put in God's world temple as a true God-made image or likeness, as against the false man-made images or idols which were put in the little man-made temples of the Babylonians. Then God, having made an excellent job of his creative work, and seen that it was very good, sits back to rest on the seventh day.

If Genesis were in any sense a scientific description, telling us in

a mysterious and cryptic way the same sort of thing as astronomers and cosmologists try to discover, then it would be untrue; no attempt to make it seem otherwise, on this premiss, is ever convincing. But you and I know that it cannot be untrue, because it is the word of God as well as of the human author who wrote it. Very well, then, in that case it cannot be a scientific description. It is true if we understand it in the sense in which it was written, long before science was ever heard of. I have suggested the sort of sense in which it might have been written. I am sure better interpretations can be found. But at least they will not be bothered with making Genesis fit science, or *vice versa*.



LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

(See THE LIFE OF THE SPIRIT, June, 1959, p. 569)

THE ROSARY DURING MASS

DEAR EDITOR,

In defence of the public recitation of the rosary being allowed sometimes during low mass, perhaps the best rejoinder to Gamaliel will be to quote *An Instruction of Pius XII*. On page 27 of Fr Clifford Howell's edition (Herder), we read about the first stage of the participation of the faithful in low mass. In this connection, we are told that, while the use of the missal is commended, an easier way of participation is possible 'by devoutly meditating on the mysteries of Jesus Christ, or by performing *other religious exercises* and saying *other prayers* which, though different in form from the liturgical prayers, *are by their nature in keeping with them*' (*Encyclical Mediator Dei*).

The italics in the foregoing quotation are mine, emphasizing the fact that even if Gamaliel is correct in insisting that holy mass and such religious exercises as the public recitation of the rosary are distinct acts of worship, the Holy Father said that they may be, and may profitably be, blended.

Yours in vinea Domini,

FR RAYMUND, O.P.

St John's Lodge, Kiln Green, Twyford, Berks.
21st June, 1959

DEAR EDITOR,

Fr Raymund in his *apologia* for the recital of the rosary at mass adduces the case of a devout mother of a priest who never hears low mass without saying the five sorrowful mysteries—What else is the holy mass, she says. The mass itself answers that question: both in the offertory prayers and in the canon itself we find the assertion that mass is not only the memorial of the passion but also of the resurrection and the ascension: 'Receive, O holy Trinity, this oblation we make to you in remembrance of the passion, resurrection, and ascension. . . .' (offertory); 'Therefore, Lord, in memory of the blessed passion of the same Christ . . . of his resurrection from the dead, and of his glorious ascension . . .' (the canon).

The resurrection is vital for the eucharist, for but for it we should have but a dead Christ in the blessed Sacrament, as some of the reformers hideously taught. The pasch is the death, the resurrection, and the ascension. To isolate the passion from its splendid consequences is to depart from our Lord's habitual linking up of the death with the resurrection and St Paul's similar teaching.

I have a true love for the rosary, and say all fifteen mysteries daily; but I would remind the good mother that the eucharist was instituted for a greater purpose than to foster devotion even to the Mother of the Lord. The priest at the altar does not say the consecration prayer and then for the rest recite the rosary! Why the many *Dominus vobiscum* appeals and the *Orate fratres*? Are they not to link up the faithful with the priest in one common action? The rosarian prays, but in isolation.

Yours, etc.
ARTHUR VALENTIN



REVIEWS

STAGES IN PRAYER. By John G. Arintero, O.P. Translated by Kathleen Pond. (Blackfriars; 12s.)

The author of this small work died in the odour of sanctity in 1928, and for some years now a movement has been afoot to obtain the introduction of his cause of beatification. He was a prolific writer on ascetical and mystical theology, and was one of the protagonists in lively controversies, particularly that which centred on the unity of Christian life and the true nature of mysticism, writing against those who held that there is a chasm between the ascetic and mystical lives and that it was presumptuous on the part of the majority of Christians to aspire to the latter. Those who remember the early years of *La Vie Spirituelle* will recollect how this battle was triumphantly carried on by Fr Arintero and Fr Garrigou-Lagrange against the opposite view which had become so general that, unbelievable though it be, even Dominicans and good Thomists were affected by it.

This book, then, dates somewhat, but it does offer a simple and useful map of the different stages of prayer, which in the author's view reflect the different stages of Christian perfection, in the Christian life. Certain deficiencies in the teaching of this school of thought have since been pointed out. Particularly, the importance given to the gifts of the Holy Ghost at the expense of the theological virtues; it is these latter which give, as it were, the substance of the spiritual life and to recognize this is not to belittle the gifts. Similarly, no recognition seems to be given to the existence of a mystical life more active than contemplative in form, which may be the fruit of the practical gifts and the supernatural virtue of prudence.

After the description of the different stages of prayer, the author proceeds to give examples of these states and then passes on to a long chapter of conclusions on the excellence of the life of contemplation and its superiority over the active life, but with St Thomas he admits that the apostolic life which combines both is more excellent than the purely contemplative life. A number of appendices contain a useful anthology of extracts from well-known spiritual writers, which illustrate certain particular points in the descriptive chapters.

Priests whose ministry calls them to deal with contemplative nuns will find this a very useful book, and all can find food for prayer both in the earlier chapters and in the numerous extracts mentioned above.

ANTONINUS FINILI, O.P.

LA MESSE. PRÉSENCE DU SACRIFICE DE LA CROIX. By Charles Journet.
(Desclée De Brouwer; 1957.)

As his previous work has shown, particularly his monumental work on the Church, still unfinished, Mgr Journet is a true theologian and a fervent disciple of St Thomas; careful in his statement of defined doctrine and its distinction from theological elaboration. In this book he has turned his attention to the mystery of holy mass. An introductory chapter summarizes the argument of the whole book. The study proper begins with the consideration of the one redemptive sacrifice of the cross, and then passes to the sacrifice of the last supper and the sacrifice of the mass and their relation to the sacrifice of the cross. This first part (chapters one to four) covers, then, the much-debated question of the essence of the sacrifice of the mass. The author then passes to the other points which require elucidation: who offers the mass, the infinite value of the mass; trans-substantiation, communion. He completes his work with a chapter containing a general view of the rite of holy mass and connected questions. The treatment is thorough, including where necessary a correction of Protestant errors on the subject. There is scarcely a page which does not provide material, not only for theological reflection but for prayerful meditation. An appendix contains a summary of the principal opinions on the essence of the mass; there is an index of proper names and a detailed table of matters, which gives as it were a synoptical view of the work and makes it easy to refer to any particular point. Detailed consideration of such a work would be out of place here, but readers may like to know how exactly Mgr Journet envisages the question of the essence of the mass. Holy mass is a true sacrifice because in it the sacrifice of the cross is not only represented, but is made truly present on the altar in all its reality; not actually indeed, as Dom Casel maintained, but virtually. Unfortunately this last expression is nowhere, it seems, clearly explained. Holy mass does not multiply the one sacrifice of Calvary, but it does multiply its presence, as it was on Calvary. To the difficulty that Calvary is passed and that Christ lives to die no more, Mgr Journet replies with an ingenious recourse to the presence of temporal events to God's eternity. To the author's view, there are many difficulties, both philosophical and theological, which could only be discussed with any profit in a technical theological review, but which appear to us to dispose of the theory. From a technical point of view, we think that the chapter on trans-substantiation is out of place; if, as St Thomas says, 'by the consecration a sacrifice is offered', the consideration of trans-substantiation should come before that of the essence of the mass, which depends on it. Whether one agrees with the author's views or not, it remains true that the work will well repay close study and that it is a notable

contribution to the investigation of a particularly arduous theological problem.

ANTONINUS FINILI, O.P.

THE HIDDEN FACE. By Ida Görres. (Burns and Oates; 30s.)

Since this is a belated review (through no fault of the editor), it will suffice to endorse without repeating the general acclamations which have greeted this book. It is original, profound, stimulating, and one can scarcely imagine its being bettered as a serious biographical study.

Frau Görres, one of Germany's foremost Catholic writers, entered the field as a complete outsider, feeling all the distrust and even disgust of an adult intellectual at the 'trashy popularity' of the cult of the 'Little Flower'. 'It seemed as if the Church were elevating into an absolute a form of Christian devotion which had been increasingly regarded by many of us as the most dubious and fleeting kind of piety in the history of the Church' (p. 13). Yet she had the intellectual humility and integrity to face up to the challenge of a canonization divinely endorsed by the 'shower of roses', and the depth and completeness of this study is surely her reward.

Stripping off the make-up in which the 'little saint' had been presented to the world, she lays bare both the raw material upon which grace worked and the true nature of the consummate holiness which the Church has set up as a model and ideal for our age. Against the background of nineteenth-century French Catholicism of which the ultra-spiritual Martin family was a microcosm, Thérèse appears as the perfection of the period's religious ideal, which in fulfilling she shatters and transcends. In the face of the 'easy-going negligence' (p. 231) of a community which reflected all the spiritual shortcomings of the period, she went straight to the heart of her Carmelite vocation of contemplative prayer and redemptive suffering, realized through unflagging faithfulness in the moment-to-moment practice of obedience and charity. All this Frau Görres details with insight, understanding and sympathy.

To suggest that for all that her study could be filled out on certain points, is not to imply that it is in any sense inadequate. Its very fulness raises issues and opens the way to further research. For example: she has done pioneering work in setting the Theresian spirituality in the full stream of the Berullian tradition which was a major influence in the moulding of the early French Carmelites. The affinity with the spirit of St Francis de Sales is also noted (p. 345). But there is no mention of the Jesuit contemplative school represented by Lallemant, Surin, Caussade and especially Grou. Yet the latter's meditation *On Little Things* in the *Manual for Interior Souls* could have been written

by Thérèse herself, and the same volume contains other striking parallels in both thought and language. Above all, one feels that this picture of the 'new Thérèse' calls for a complementary one from a professional theologian. Fr Petitot, O.P., led the way with his *St Thérèse of Lisieux* (English tr. 1927). This has never been superseded, and Frau Görres quotes it with approval. But there is room for a fuller study in the light of contemporary teaching on the nature of mysticism and of the call to contemplation and to holiness. The application to her life of the principles of Thomist mysticism, so brilliantly set forth in Fr Joret's *Contemplation Mystique*, would place the 'little way' in its true theological perspective and give the lie to the contention that Thérèse was no mystic.

At the beatification process a famous exorcist said that he had often heard from the mouths of possessed persons of the power of the 'little virgin' over demons *parcequ'elle était une âme détruite*. That, surely, is the crux. Unremitting self-conquest which began almost in the cradle—'from the age of three I have never refused God anything'—issued into an even more heroic self-effacement which left her whole being utterly open and surrendered to the action of divine love in and through her. 'One who is thus mastered by God is "a focus of divine forces", an open door for the effective entrance of God into humanity' (p. 131). Such a one is indeed 'another Christ', the Father's beloved child, interceding and suffering for the whole world: 'I live, now not I: but Christ liveth in me' (Gal. ii, 20).

A young person, seeing for the first time an un-touched-up photograph of the saint, looked at it for a moment in stunned silence and then said: 'Almost like the face of a female Christ' (p. 13). Would anything have pleased Thérèse more, or have pin-pointed more aptly the secret of her sanctity and influence?

S. M. ALBERT, O.P.

THESE LAST DAYS. By a Religious of C.S.M.V. (The Faith Press; 9s. 6d.)

'Greatly daring, but we hope with a reverence to match' (p. 31), an anglican religious Sister here sets out to present the facts of man's origin and destiny as known from revelation, against the background of such scientific knowledge about them as is available today.

'Time Seen Through Christian Eyes' is the sub-title, and the whole story from creation to the final consummation is compressed into eleven chapters. Modern discoveries and hypotheses throw light on the obscurities of pre-history, while a study of the Greek terms used by N.T. writers is the basis of conjectures as to what awaits us at the end of time and in eternity.

Scholarly and devotional, the book is thoroughly in the spirit of

Divino Afflante, and it is only on occasional points of theology and exegesis that Catholics will have to part company with the author. It will be a happy day when a similar blend of 'true learning and solid piety' becomes evident in the general run of popular Catholic writing.

S. M. ALBERT, O.P.

COMMUNION THROUGH PAIN. By Mary Jackson. (Blackfriars Publications; 6s. 6d.)

Our Lady's reiterated command for repentance and penance has inspired this series of meditations, intended primarily for those for whom 'the introduction to reality by pain has begun'.

Suffering is a predicament and a challenge. It involves us 'most poignantly and most personally in the "vast aboriginal calamity" which is original sin' (p. 1), challenging us to face up to and to accept all the implications of this situation, in both its personal and its cosmic aspects. And the generous acceptance of the challenge of pain may involve us in the even more painful challenge of holiness through the way of contemplative prayer.

Mary Jackson wrestles with the problem with the help of poets and theologians, and her conclusions have value not only for those whose day is measured 'from one dose of medicine to another' (p. 55), but for anyone who realizes that 'there is nothing so potent and precious in God's hands here below as man's free and loving suffering gathered into the heart of God' (p. 84). Particularly striking is the explanation of our Lord's words: 'take my yoke upon you'—that he had in mind the double ox-yoke still used in primitive countries, with the animals yoked side by side. Although he has gone on ahead, he is our companion in the way pulling along with us, and communion with him through the long nights of pain of soul or body is meant to issue in the consummation of union in a mystical death from which springs a new and unending life. All this flows from God's work in us at mass, which must be so 'stamped on us like a seal' that our whole life is one ceaseless communion and sacrifice, a permanent rendezvous with the Beloved Hero.

Chronic sickness can so easily mean chronic depression and frustration. It is heartening to find it presented as the stuff of holiness and a call to close union with God.

S. M. ALBERT, O.P.

JOURNEY TO BETHLEHEM. By Dorothy Dohen. (Geoffrey Chapman; 8s. 6d.)

Dorothy Dohen, a well-known American journalist, was for four years editor of the magazine *Integrity*. Her earlier book, *Vocation to*

Love, was published in five languages. This one is a joy to read, and it should prove a gift to anyone who is trying to bring home to lay-folk the reality of their call to holiness and the possibility of its achievement by means of the ups and downs of their ordinary daily life.

Each chapter is complete in itself and one is hard put to choose between them: silence, prudence, the cross, hope, group action as a help to holiness. Each topic is treated with a lightness of touch which makes for easy reading, yet it is the *sana doctrina* of St Thomas and the mystics which is so pleasantly put across in terms of the relationships and experiences of every-day living.

The final chapter on daily heroism looks at St Thérèse of Lisieux as 'a heroine to make heroism possible without making it less heroic, to make sanctity imitable without causing it to be less holy, to make the love of God attractive by stripping it of all extraneous dramatics and showing it as it is in itself' (p. 87). In an age in which it requires heroism to live an ordinary Christian life, she shows the tremendous power of love 'even if it is love hidden in great desire and revealed only in little things' (p. 96).

But is this the *first* age to demand such heroism? Perhaps Dorothy Dohen does not know about England in the penal times.

S. M. ALBERT, O.P.

VOCATION TO LOVE. By Dorothy Dohen. (Sheed and Ward; 10s. 6d.)

The lively review *Integrity* was both a product and an instrument of the lay apostolate movement in America. A zealous and radically Christian outlook, good editing and layout, and a touch of satire at the expense of the world, the flesh and the devil, all helped to make an unusual and valuable Catholic review. Dorothy Dohen was one of its regular contributors from the beginning, and its editor for several years—a task which must surely have required faith and courage, as well as editorial ability.

This book consists of articles which originally appeared in *Integrity*. They deal with various topics; how a Christian should face a practical problem (poverty, loneliness, frustration) or live up to a difficult ideal (detachment, joy, peace). Miss Dohen does not underestimate the difficulties, but neither does she minimize the obligations of the Christian. She assumes we know that we are all called to be saints, and that nothing less will satisfy us. One theme keeps recurring throughout: that love (or charity—both words are much misused) is the fundamental basis of the Christian life. Miss Dohen's clear vision of this principle gives her book a unity seldom found in a collection of articles.

The metamorphosis into book form is not altogether gain: anyone who read these articles in the original context will miss the satirical

verses and cartoons of *Integrity*. On the other hand, Miss Dohen's own achievement is now clearer than ever. She writes with the vigour and economy of good journalism, but what she has to say is of lasting value. These articles, written particularly for those engaged in the lay apostolate, deserve to reach a larger public in this country. It is good to have them in a permanent form in this well-produced little book.

A.G.

MINIATURE LIVES OF THE SAINTS, compiled by Rev. H. S. Bowden.

Edited and revised by Donald Attwater. (Burns and Oates; 18s.)

Originally issued as separate leaflets for the use of the brothers of the Little Oratory, these miniature lives were gathered together and published in two volumes in 1877 by Henry Sebastian Bowden, who himself had compiled many of the biographies. In his preface he referred to an imposing group of assistants including Cardinals Manning and Newman, the great spiritual writer Bishop Hedley, O.S.B., the noted historian Fr T. E. Bridgett, C.S.S.R., Fr Bertrand Wilberforce, O.P., and Mother Francis Raphael Drane. To these names can now be deservedly added that of the new editor, Mr Donald Attwater, already celebrated as the editor twice over of Butler's *Lives*; for he has added to the original work short biographies of more modern saints including Cardinal John Fisher, Thomas More, John Vianney, John Bosco, Teresa of the Infant Jesus and Pius X.

With a biography for each day of the year, daily quotations from some great saint and doctor, and short spiritual instructions the volume provides an excellent exercise in spiritual reading for many who love God but have not the leisure to read as much as they would like about him, his holy Mother and his saints.

W.G.

THE MODERNITY OF ST AUGUSTINE. By Jean Guitton. Translated by A. V. Littledale. (Geoffrey Chapman; 7s. 6d.)

This slight volume (eighty-eight pages) contains the author's thoughts on the relevance of St Augustine in our day, which were first presented in Paris and Geneva upon the occasion of St Augustine's sixteenth centenary. He compares St Augustine with some of the great thinkers of our age, and shows how they differ or are similar, and the way in which their thought might often have been deepened and perfected—not changed necessarily—had they had a greater share in or sympathy with his vision, a vision attained largely in experience. The author has a slight tendency to ask the sort of question: 'What would Augustine's answer have been if he had been placed in such-and-such circumstances?'—a technique which always tends to have a

somewhat artificial ring about it. This is however not very marked, and is no more than a very slight blemish.

The author is concerned especially with Augustine's grasp of the relationship between the dimensions of time and eternity—two dimensions of what is a single unity, the over-all 'economy' of God—which manifests itself particularly in the *City of God*. These are seen in, and throw light upon, the interior and exterior aspects of the life of the individual, and the same aspects in the history of society. Having set out these problems, which are an especial concern of man today, in two stimulating chapters, he shows their unity and the essential importance of this unity in a third, which forms the proper conclusion. To this has been added, however, a fourth chapter: 'St Augustine's place in the history of Europe' which is taken from the preface of a larger work (*Existence et Destinée, le temps et l'éternité chez Plotin et saint Augustin*), and although this has its interests and its merits, it neither has the quality of the rest, nor is it fully relevant. It might appear to be relevant to the English title of the book, but it is not so to the general theme; for 'Modernity' is not a perfect equivalent to 'Actualité', the original title of the work.

One complaint must be made. In a book so small and unpretentious references on any large scale are not to be expected, but in the first twenty pages there are fifteen notes quoting relevant passages. On page 29 we have note 16 which gives an erroneous reference, and on page 53 we have note 16 again, this time correctly. There are no other references, although in at least two or three other places they would seem to be absolutely necessary. This piece of carelessness is a pity.

G.R.H.

PROPHET AND WITNESS IN JERUSALEM. By Adrian Hastings. (Longmans, Green and Co.; n.p.)

The purpose of this book is to show the way in which St Luke achieved and passed on his understanding of Christ; to help us to understand more fully the message of the third gospel and the Acts of the Apostles; to enable us to recognize the distinctive character of the way in which St Luke accepted and proclaimed our Lord as the Son of God.

There is, running throughout this book, an interesting core which to some extent does justice to its intention. The surrounding fruit however is, for the most part, flabby and tasteless. The theme appears to be packed out with whimsical and slightly sentimental background-speculation, which does not really add anything to the argument. The effect of this is made rather worse by the large number of 'academic'

references, which although in themselves of value, nevertheless appear to be out of place and a little pretentious.

This book claims to be for those seriously interested in the new testament; as such it cannot really be said to be satisfactory.

G.R.H.

JESUS' PROMISE TO THE NATIONS. By Joachim Jeremias. (S.C.M. Press; 7s. 6d.)

How and in what sense did Jesus intend the gentiles to belong to the kingdom of God? To this much-discussed problem Dr Jeremias has a solution to suggest that is beautifully argued and deeply satisfying. The first section of the book leads to three negative conclusions. (1) 'Jesus pronounces a stern judgment upon the Jewish mission to the gentiles.' (Abundant and extremely interesting evidence is adduced from Jewish records, to show the nature and extent of this missionary activity among the Jewish contemporaries of our Lord.) (2) 'Jesus forbade his disciples during his life-time to preach to non-Jews.' (3) 'Jesus limited his own activity to Israel.' This third point is the most startling and requires most proving, but by means of the modified form-critical method which he has made his own, Dr Jeremias finds no difficulty in arguing that such authentic *logia* of our Lord as appear to run counter to this conclusion, in fact refer to the eschatological period following upon the cross and resurrection. Other references to a gentile mission are reinterpretations and expansions to be ascribed to the evangelists themselves.

The second section, with its three *positive* conclusions, is even more interesting. (1) 'Jesus removes the idea of vengeance (against the gentiles) from the eschatological expectation.' (2) 'Jesus promises the gentiles a share in salvation.' (3) 'The redemptive activity and lordship of Jesus includes the gentiles.' Here the author shows that in citing the old testament oracles on the eschatological expectation (e.g. Luke iv, 19, citing Is. lxi, 2, Matt. xi, 5 citing Is. xxxv, 5, and also Is. xxix, 18 and xli, 1, etc.) Jesus deliberately omitted words importing hatred of the gentiles, and so drew the anti-gentile sting from old testament eschatology. The predictions of woe are now transferred from the gentiles to the *faithless* who refuse to believe in Jesus. If Israel persists in her faithless rejection of the good news, then in the final judgment the gentiles will take the place of the sons of the kingdom. In the final judgment the distinction between Israel and the gentiles will disappear; exactly the same justice will be meted out to each. 'The *genea* of Israel, having rejected Jesus, will be condemned, and will undergo the bitter experience of seeing gentiles find mercy' (p. 51). Jesus' positive redemptive work in regard to the gentiles is based on his consciousness of authority over them as 'Son of Man', as the 'meek Messiah' of

Zechariah, as the Messiah who is 'not only David's son but David's lord', and as 'servant of Yahweh'.

So far, as Dr Jeremias puts it, 'Our study has landed us in what appears to be a complete contradiction. We have found on the one hand that Jesus limited his activity to Israel, and imposed the same limitation upon his disciples. On the other hand, it has been established that Jesus expressly promised the gentiles a share in the kingdom of God, and even warned his Jewish hearers that their own place might be taken by the gentiles.' (p. 55.) How then is the *promise* of Jesus to be reconciled with his *practice* during his life on earth? By setting his words against the background of old testament eschatology. The author summarizes the eschatological teaching of the old testament on this point under five heads: The epiphany of God, the call of God, the journey of the gentiles, worship at the world sanctuary, and the messianic banquet on the world mountain. 'Thus we see that the incorporation of the gentiles in the kingdom of God promised by the prophets, was expected and announced by Jesus as God's *eschatological act of power, as the great final manifestation of God's free grace.*' (p. 70.) Before this could take place, two events had to intervene: first the call of Israel (fulfilled in our Lord's earthly ministry) and secondly, the death and resurrection of the Saviour. The time of the gentiles must follow the cross.

This book seems to me to be deeply important for two reasons in particular: First for the light it throws on the question of Jesus' 'eschatological consciousness' (a subject which has received great attention recently), secondly because it provides an ideal basis for comparing our Lord's own teaching on the subject with that contained in Acts and the Pauline epistles, and so for perceiving the essential continuity between them.

JOSEPH BOURKE, O.P.

THE NEW TRANSLATIONS OF THE BIBLE. By E. H. Robertson. (S.C.M. Press; 10s. 6d.)

The series of *Studies in Ministry and Worship* to which this book belongs is intended to serve certain resuscitations in English Christianity by opening an interdenominational forum to discuss current practical and theoretical problems. It is doubtful if a slack and shoaly survey like this of recent English translations of the Bible can help much in resolving the true difficulties of making a completely new English version.

The book stops in eager expectancy of the version at present in progress under the direction of Professor Dodd. We share this eagerness; but at the same time a mounting discontent with this book makes it seem likely that the Catholic failure to collaborate in the new version is not so inexplicable as some Catholics think. The first con-

siderations, as Mr Robertson says, are accuracy and intelligibility, but as soon as one begins to probe the modern translations he examines it becomes evident that these principles point outside his book in certain *theological* directions.

To whom is a translation to be intelligible? Presumably not only to Christians or to certain Christians—and yet if we are to say that the Bible is the Book of the Church, the book which plays an essentially creative role in the Church, both in the original formative period and continuously as a permanent centre of resource (for example in the liturgical and theological practice of the community), do we not begin to see refractory and crucial theological problems which this book never broaches? The Church is the New Israel: will it really do, like Rieu, to put the old testament references in Matthew into footnotes? The use of scripture is as significant as its existence: how is one to maintain the sacral quality that cultic use demands and creates? The Bible is a much richer book for Christians than it can ever be for anybody else. Is it much of an exaggeration to say that recent attempts to make it 'intelligible' make it attractive but ultimately barren? It is a serious question, whether we need two different versions: a readable text for butterfly-readers and a more resonant text for those who still 'search the scriptures'.

Catholic vernacular texts may not be published without notes. Would it not be better to dwell less on the negative aspects of ecclesiastical concern for scripture (Mr Robertson takes some pleasure in our freedom to read the Knox Bible) and to think of these notes not as Bishop Challoner's stalwart vindications but as the generous clues and insights offered by the Jerusalem Bible? 'At the beginning God expressed himself' is a brave attempt by J. B. Phillips to put the *logos* of the Johannine prologue into accurate English. But can accuracy of this kind really compare with the token translation by *Verbe* in the French Bible and its brief note and references which at least establish the inadequacy of any translation and encourage one gradually to take possession of something of the meaning? There is no use in encouraging anybody to skim the Bible.

We hope that it will not be too long before we have an English Bible which will be intelligible and accurate in the more complex and theologically directed senses we have tried to suggest. Meanwhile we have this book, but it hardly lives up to the promise of its fine cover.

F.K.

HAPPINESS WITH GOD. By Dom Basil Whelan, O.S.B. (Bloomsbury Publishing Co. Ltd.; 12s. 6d.)

This is a collection of twenty spiritual conferences, intended originally for religious, but one hopes that they will now find a far wider

circle of readers. They really are inspiring. This is the kind of book one wishes to pass on to a friend when one has read it. It is good spiritual reading with just that touch of poetry every now and again, which lights it up all along the way. 'We do not walk into heaven on our own feet, we are carried in on the shoulders of the good shepherd; we do not swim into the harbour of safety by our own strength, we are swept into it on the high tide of the merits of our saviour' (p. 43). There is an excellent chapter on what is called, after St Francis de Sales, 'the little virtues', and an even better one on the words 'If thou didst know the gift of God'. Certainly this little book can be recommended, and when read, put into the hands of others.

D.A.L.

CHRIST AT EVERY CROSSROAD. By F. Desplanques, S.J., trans. G. R. Serve. (The Newman Press, Westminster, Maryland; \$2.75.)

This book could have been written only in France, a country where the youth of the Church is being renewed like the eagle's. In twenty-five meditations, Fr Desplanques explores the truths of the gospel and the mysteries of the faith with a stimulating freshness of vision. His subjects are diverse—from the circumcision to the angels, and from the dormition to a Christian burial in France. He has an intense awareness of the mystery of the incarnation, of the paradox of the eucharist, of the pain and beauty of the cross. It is these pivotal truths which give to the book its profound unity. His language is contemporary, his application penetrating, his style forceful yet often moving.

These meditations are difficult in any literary *genre*. Sometimes they are vivid commentaries on gospel scenes, sometimes they verge on poetry, with isolated lines forming a counterpoint to the main text. The writer which this brings to mind is Whitman. He is like Whitman in his use of long rhythmic lines, in the intimate relationship he establishes with the reader, in his sudden movement from prosaic statement to moments of true poetry. Unfortunately he shares some of Whitman's defects also, notably his formlessness and over-repetition. Yet where Whitman spoke for humanity in the mass bound by the spirit of friendship, Fr Desplanques speaks for humanity redeemed and bound by the spirit of love. He is a poet of the mystical body.

Outstanding is a lovely gentle meditation on our Lady's dormition, where he takes the unpromising material that nothing was said about it because 'there was nothing to say', and weaves out of this a moving commentary on 'that mysterious departure . . . when Mary was taken by her spouse'. Not all the book is up to this standard, but he can suddenly transcend a conventional discourse with an unexpected and profound conclusion. Sometimes amusing, often tender and moving,

fired by the joy of the faith, at his best Fr Desplanques is very good indeed. He possesses in a marked degree a quality not uncommon among spiritual writers—an awareness of mystery. He writes from the still centre, where Christianity is apprehended as a Person, where history and this world of time are transfigured in the vision of Christ all-in-all.

D.P.M.

THE LITURGICAL MOVEMENT AND THE LOCAL CHURCH. By Alfred R. Shands. (S.C.M. Press; 8s. 6d.)

This little book is intended for Christians of all communions. The author, a young American Episcopalian minister, visited, in the space of a year, various liturgical centres in Europe—both Catholic and Protestant. He then settled down to write a book out of what he calls 'the jig-saw of pieces of experience which though dissimilar fitted together into one whole'. Unhappily the jig-saw pieces with their odd uncompromising edges do not fit into a single picture although he pressed them together confidently. Forcing is strictly against jig-saw rules: one is left with the impression that several puzzle packets have got mixed up. The dissimilarities of the various traditions are more important for their proper assessment than the loose generalities required to fit them together. The work of the Iona community, for example, must be understood in the context of the Scottish working class parish and the liturgical and theological traditions of the Scottish Presbyterian Church. The complexities of contemporary Anglican liturgical life receive a careless unsympathetic handling. How, for instance, can Cranmer's liturgical ideals be recommended by an adherent of the 'Parish Communion' movement? Cranmer's excision of the eucharistic offertory was the expression of a very different sort of liturgical theology than Mr Shands recommends. The very impressive liturgical-pastoral work of the Church of England (which should be of the greatest interest to English Catholics) is inevitably confused by this kind of ecumenical approach which presupposes one packet and one picture.

C.B.